

Message Text

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PAGE 01 YAOUND 02026 260210Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5291
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 2026

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R P A R A F O U R

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINR, EAID, UR, CM, ET, RH

REF: (A) 77 YAOUNDE A-41, (B) 77 YAOUNDE A-6

1. ON A18 APRIL 1978 FIRTS SECRETARY OF SOVIET EMBASSY, LEV
LYZHENKOV, CALLED ON EMBOFF FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF SITUATION IN
AFRICA. HIS PRIMARY INTEREST, HOWEVER, WAS IN THE RECENTLY
CONCLUDED U.S. AMBASSADOR'S ECONOMIC SEMINAR HELD AT MONT FEBE
HOTEL IN YAOUNDE. LYZHENKOV SAID THAT HIS AMBASSADOR HAD
ATTENDED RECEPTION GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR SMYTHE FOR VISITING
U.S. AMBASSADORS. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WAS NOT CLEAR ON THE
PURPOSE OF THE "CONFERENCE" AND ASKED LYZHENKOV TO LOOK INTO
THE MATTER. LYZHENKOV SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WERE REALLY
PUZZLED BY THE FACT THAT A GROUP OF U.S. AMBASSADORS WOULD
HOLD A "CONFERENCE" IN A PUBLIC HOTEL. HE ADDED THAT ANY
SIMILAR MEETING OF SOVIET OFFICIALS WOULD ALWAYS BE HELD IN THE
SOVIET EMBASSY. EMBOFF EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS AN ACTUAL SEMINAR,
INTENDED TO PROVIDE AMBASSADORS WITH LATEST APPRECIATION OF
ECONOMIC FACTORS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AT WORK IN NORTH-SOUTH
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RELATIONS. EMBOFF EXPLAINED THERE WAS NOTHING SECRET ABOUT
MEETING AND, FOR THAT MATTER, THAT NOTHING CLASSIFIED WAS ON THE
AGENDA. LYZHENKOV SEEMED A LITTLE DAZED BY THIS OPEN APPROACH TO
DOING BUSINESS.

2. LYZHENKOV NEXT ASKED FOR A CLARIFICATION OF THE U.S. APPROACH
TO THE "ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN" FOR A SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN

SITUATION. EMBOFF SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW THE U.S. FEELS THERE CAN BE NO MEANINGFUL PEACE UNLESS ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INSURGENT FORCES, ARE INCLUDED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SETTLEMENT OR SOLUTION WHICH MAY BE ARRANGED. LYZHENKOV INJECTED THE ANTICIPATED COMMENTS ABOUT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

3. EMBOFF ASKED FOR LYZHENKOV'S VIEWS OF CURRENT SITUATION IN ERITREA. LYZHENKOV AGAIN GAVE WHAT APPEARED TO BE A MEMORIZED RESPONSE, NAMELY THAT THE SOVIET UNION ENDORSED ETHIOPIA'S RIGHT TO MAINTAIN ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HE SAID THAT INCLUDED THE RIGHT TO FRUSTRATE ANY ATTEMPTS AT SECESSION BY SEPARATIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE ERITREANS. THEN, AND WITH A STRAIGHT FACE, LYZHENKOV SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD A CLEAR APPRECIATION OF A GIVEN PEOPLE'S DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE. HE CITED AS A HISTORICAL PRECEDENT THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD ACCEDED TO THE DESIRES OF THE FINNISH PEOPLE AND HAD AGREED TO FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE.

4. LYZHENKOV VOLUNTEERED THAT SOVIET RELATIONS WITH CAMEROON ARE VERY LOW KEY. HE SAID THAT CAMEROON IS BUYING VERY LITTLE FROM THE USSR WHICH, IN TURN, PRINCIPALLY PURCHASES ONLY COCOA AND LUMBER FROM CAMEROON. THE ONLY BRIGHT SPOT IN THE COMMERCIAL FIELD IS THE SALE OF LADA VEHICLES THROUGH CATECO, THE JOINT SOVIET-CAMEROONIAN SALES COMPANY ESTABLISHED FOR THIS PURPOSE. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET SIDE HAS A CONTROLLING INTEREST IN CATECO.
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IN THE CULTURAL FIELD, LYZHENKOV SAID THAT VIRTUALLY NOTHING IS BEING DONE. HE SAID THE CAMEROONIAN GOVERNMENT HAD REFUSED TO ALLOW THE SHOWING OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1918 REVOLUTION. HE SAID THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAD ASKED PERMISSION TO ARRANGE THE EXHIBIT TO COINCIDE WITH THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN NOVEMBER 1978. LYZHENKOV SAID THAT A SOVIET SOCCER TEAM OF MEDIUM CALIBER HAD VISITED CAMEROON TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO AND HAD "CRUSHED" THE CAMEROONIANS. SINCE THAT TIME, HAVING RECOGNIZED THAT THEIR BRAND OF SOCCER IS NOT UP TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, THE CAMEROONIAN GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO REFUSE PERMISSION FOR ANOTHER VISIT BY A SOVIET SOCCER TEAM, ACCORDING TO LYZHENKOV. HE INDICATED THAT A VERY RECENT REQUEST HAD ONCE AGAIN BEEN REFUSED. LYZHENKOV SAID THE ONLY ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF COOPERATION ARE THE TEACHING EFFORTS OF THE SMALL SOVIET STAFFS ASSIGNED TO THE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL IN DSCHANG AND TO THE FORESTRY SCHOOL IN MBALMAYO. HE SAID THERE ARE ONLY THREE OR FOUR SOVIET TEACHERS, TOGETHER WITH THEIR FAMILIES, AT EACH LOCATION. HE ADDED THAT PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAD BEEN SO IMPRESSED WITH THE WORK DONE AT THE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL IN DSCHANG THAT THE PRESIDENT INTENDED TO ORGANIZE AN AGRICULTURAL FACULTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE.

5. COMMENT: THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY APPROPRIATE COMMENT TO BE MADE ON THIS FASCINATING INSIGHT IN THE REMARKS OF THIS FOUR YEAR VETERAN OF CAMEROONIAN SERVICE, EXCEPT TO OBSERVE THAT HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE ARE AT VARIANCE WITH THE FACTS. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE WILL USE THE EXISTING DSCHANG FACILITIES, THEY WILL HAVE TO CONSIDERABLY AUGMENTED WITH RESPECT TO BOTH PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND FACULTY. FURTHERMORE, AT THE TIME OF THE OPENING OF THE SCHOOLS WHEN THE SOVIETS TRIED TO TAKE CREDIT FOR BUILDING BOTH, THE GURC TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF ISSUING A PRESS STATEMENT SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT BY NOTING EXACTLY HOW LITTLE THE SOVIETS HAD ACTUALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THESE PROJECTS (ONLY \$3.8 MILLION OF \$15 MILLION). FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE SEE REFRAIRS.

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